

Two High School Grads Benefit from Research Opportunities Provided by NSF Grant to SWOSU

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University and Dr. Andrea Holgado (right) recently received a \$10,500 grant from the National Science Foundation for research experiences for two high school graduates—Christiana Hayden of Hydro-Eakly and Chase Wright of Weatherford.

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Andrea Holgado, an assistant professor in the SWOSU Biological Sciences Department, is mentoring Christiana Hayden and Chase Wright, two high school graduates from Hydro-Eakly and Weatherford, respectively, with the NSF grant. Through this unique educational experience, Hayden and Wright will be given the opportunity to utilize experimentation and data analysis to investigate the protein VSM-1 and its binding partners.

Hayden plans on studying secondary education in the plans of being a high school science teacher. She heard of this opportunity through her science teacher, Kerri Kirby, who worked with Holgado last summer. Hayden sees this opportunity as a chance to learn more advanced science skills. She has loved science for years and wants to be able to teach it to others. Holgado said this summer research will be a great experience for Hayden to take with her wherever she goes with her career.

Wright will be attending SWOSU in the fall and will be majoring in biology. He plans on continuing his education in health-related fields. Wright heard of this research opportunity through his high school biology teacher, Barbara Lindamood, and sent in his application. He sees the research opportunity as a great introduction to science and to SWOSU and plans to keep learning and receiving experience through the lab this summer.

Holgado guides a team primarily consisting of undergraduate students in studies of neurobiology using the microscopic worm *C. elegans*.